

ELABORATIONS

News and Issues for Washington's Clinical Laboratories

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Bioterrorism Preparedness Training

The National Laboratory Training Network and the Microbial Diseases Laboratory of the California Department of Health Services would like to offer *free* access to our course *Bioterrorism Preparedness Training for LRN Sentinel Laboratories*. The course is offered monthly and begins on the first day of the month, and access to the course ends on the last day of the month. Students will be awarded a P.A.C.E.® CEU certificate for 1.5 contact hours for a score of at least 70% on the post-test for each module. More information about the course is included below for reviewing.

Course Description: This five-module interactive course has been developed to provide clinical laboratory scientists with information about the laboratory identification of Anthrax, Brucella, Plague, and Tularemia along with an introduction to the Laboratory Response Network (LRN). The course was developed by a team of content experts and information technology personnel from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Microbial Diseases Laboratory (MDL) with instructional design and project management support from the National Laboratory Training Network (NLTN). The course seeks to assist clinical laboratory scientists to better recognize potential agents of bioterrorism that they might encounter during routine laboratory work-ups of sputum, blood and aspirate/biopsy specimens. Laboratory managers may consider using this course to assess competency of their staff to accurately perform the relevant laboratory procedures and to correctly refer specimens for confirmatory testing.

The program developers wish to inform the viewer that along with general information about the national Laboratory Response Network (LRN), the LRN module contains information about how the LRN has been

implemented in the State of California. Approximately 14% of the pages of this module mention California. Approximately 25% of the Internet links in this module reference California-specific information.

Course Content: The course content consists of interactive modules that provide the learner with information about four microorganisms that could be implicated in a bioterrorism event. Each module opens with information about the organism under study and then proceeds to a story-based simulation in which the learners engage themselves in defined laboratory-related scenarios. Three types of scenarios are included: endemic, confounding and bioterrorism-related. At intervals, the learners make multiple-choice decisions that mimic the types of decisions they would make in a real job situation. The lessons are made interesting and entertaining by the inclusion of images of the scenario characters and audio of their conversations.

For further information with demos about the course go to: <http://www.bttrain.org>.

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Practice Guidelines

The following practice guidelines have been developed by the Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. They can be accessed at the following website:
www.doh.wa.gov/lqa.htm

Anemia	Lipid Screening
ANA	PAP Smear
Bioterrorism Event Mgmt	Point-of-Care Testing
Bleeding Disorders	PSA
Chlamydia	Rash Illness
Diabetes	Red Cell Transfusion
Group A Strep Pharyngitis	Renal Disease
Group B Streptococcus	STD
Hepatitis	Thyroid
HIV	Tuberculosis
Infectious Diarrhea	Urinalysis
Intestinal Parasites	Wellness

Emergency Preparedness for the Clinical Lab: Chain of Evidence Requirements

by Laura Kentala, DOH/PHL

Should you ever be involved in assisting with a chemical or biological terrorism event, any specimens you handle will be considered to be evidence and must be treated as such. Sealing of suspect blood tubes and urine cups with evidence tape is required to ensure that the chain of custody is intact when shipping these specimens to your Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Reference Laboratory or to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This seems like a rather simple task but have you really thought about all the aspects of the job?

I recently watched a practice run of 10 sets of specimens being packaged and shipped. Each set contains four tubes of blood and one urine cup. Applying the evidence tape alone took 25 minutes by people who were trained and experienced. Forty sets will be the minimum requirement by CDC for the terrorism response investigation. Multiply that time for 10 sets by four and it will take you 100 minutes or one hour and 40 minutes just to seal the tubes and cups. More time will be needed for the actual packaging for shipment.

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Website addresses:

DOH home page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov>

LQA home page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/lqa.htm>

PHL home page:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/default.htm>

Here are some things you might want to think about as you prepare to train your team before a major event.

Identification Labels: The sample identification label on the tube needs to be low enough on the tube so that the evidence tape does not cover it. If the sample identification label is covered even in part by the evidence tape, it may be damaged when the evidence tape is removed. Critical identification information may be destroyed.

Evidence Tape: The evidence tape should be pre-cut to the appropriate length for your tubes. This can save a lot of time. If you have purchased pre-cut tape, check to see if it is too long or short and note whether it will need to be trimmed. Is the evidence tape that you have purchased waterproof and freezer proof? You will need to test the tape to make sure it performs as expected. Have you checked that for yourself? The team that ran the above exercise did double check their tape and found that a recommended brand was not, in fact, freeze-proof. Is the tape wide enough to do the job? If you have bought various widths of evidence tape, now is the time to try them out to see which size works best for the size of tubes you are using. This may also have to do with how secure you want these tubes to be sealed. The narrow tape does not completely seal the cap of the tube from leakage, but it will show that the evidence is sealed. Now is a good time to decide what your lab wants.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Most labs have various types of gloves from latex to nitrile. Determine what type of gloves you will require for this procedure. Wear these for all of the practice sessions.

Response Team: Allocate specific jobs to everyone who will be participating in the exercise. It helps to have one person deal with the evidence tape application since the tape can be tricky to peel off from its backing, especially with gloves on. Everyone on the team should participate in each aspect of the process.

Prepare:

- Select your shipping/packaging team and make sure they are trained.

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- Decide on the specimen category and select the proper shipping protocols.
- Decide on what type of PPE you will need to wear.

Practice:

- Have enough practice tubes for everyone on the team to do five to six tubes.
- One person should cut the evidence tape to the predetermined length.
- Everyone should practice peeling the backing paper from the tape with gloves on.
- Everyone should practice taping the tube and initialing it properly with gloves on.

With a little practice this will become easier. Making it easier and quicker is the goal. Two recent news events, in New York City and Texas, once again brought to mind the need to be prepared for any event. It is not enough to have the supplies available and a couple of people selected to man the stations. Team members need to be trained in all aspects of the shipping and packing procedure.

Additional information regarding chain of custody, evidence tape, shipping and handling of chemical or biological terrorism specimens can be obtained through courses offered through the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories Training Program. Special classes on Shipping and Handling of Infectious Substances and LRN Sentinel Laboratory Training are offered periodically. Refer to the PHL Training Program website (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehspl/phl/training/train.htm>) for a schedule of classes. If you have questions, please contact the PHL Training Program by e-mail at phl.training@doh.wa.gov.

MTS Proposed WAC Change Public Hearing Notice

The Medical Test Site (MTS) program has initiated the process to modify the MTS Washington Administrative Code (WAC) to change the MTS license cycle to correspond with the dates of the Washington State biennial budget. (*For more information about the proposed MTS WAC change, see the April edition of Elaborations.*)

A public hearing on the proposed MTS WAC change will be held on **June 27, 2006**, from **10:30 - 11:30 a.m.** at:

Washington State Department of Health
Point Plaza East, Room 326
310 Israel Road SE
Tumwater, WA 98501

Anyone planning to attend this hearing who requires a sign language interpreter or needs the material in an alternative format may contact Yvette Fox at (360) 236-2928, TDD (800) 833-6388, by June 20, 2006, so arrangements can be made to meet those needs.

MTS Proposed WAC Change Hearing Notice

A public hearing on the proposed MTS WAC change will be held on **June 27, 2006**, from **10:30 - 11:30 a.m.** at the Washington State Department of Health Offices at Point Plaza East in Tumwater. See the notice on page 3 for more information about the hearing.

Calendar of Events

PHL Training Classes:

(<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/phl/training/train.htm>)

Intestinal Parasites

June 14 and 15 Shoreline

Northwest Medical Laboratory Symposium

(<http://www.wsscls.org>)

October 18-21, 2006 Portland

13th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference

(<http://www.doh.wa.gov/lqa.htm>)

November 13, 2006 Seattle

2007 ASCLS-Washington Spring Meeting

(<http://www.wsscls.org>)

April 2007 Tri-Cities

Contact information for the events listed above can be found on page 2. The Calendar of Events is a list of upcoming conferences, deadlines, and other dates of interest to the clinical laboratory community. If you have events that you would like to have included, please mail them to ELABORATIONS at the address on page 2. Information must be received at least one month before the scheduled event. The editor reserves the right to make final decisions on inclusion.